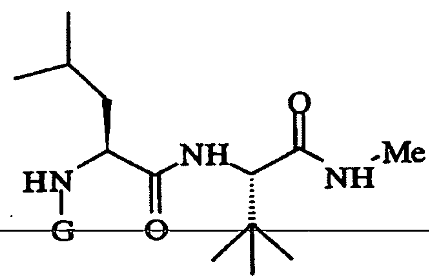
AMENDMENT

In the Claims:

Please replace original claims 1-13 with the following claims:

A1

1. A process for the preparation of a dipeptide of formula 1 comprising



(1)

coupling N-protected L-leucine to L-*tert*.-leucine-N-methylamide in the presence of an activating agent, wherein G is a protective group that is a formyl group.

2. The process according to claim 1 in which the L-*tert*.-leucine-N-methylamide has an enantiomeric excess greater than 98%

3. The process according to claim 1 in which the N-formyl-L-leucine has an enantiomeric excess greater than 98%.

4. The process according to claim 1 further comprising subjecting the N-formyl-L-leucyl-L-*tert*.-leucine-N-methylamide obtained to one or more crystallizations.

5. The process according to claim 1 further comprising deformylating the dipeptide obtained.

6. The process according to claim 5 further comprising subjecting the L-leucyl-L-*tert*.-leucine-N-methylamide obtained to one or more crystallizations.

7. The process according to claim 5 further comprising coupling the L-leucyl-L-*tert.*-leucine-N-methylamide to a substituted or nonsubstituted α-mercaptocarboxylic acid to form the corresponding N-α-optionally substituted mercaptocarboxyl-L-leucyl-L-*tert.*-leucine-N-methylamide.

8. A compound which is N-formyl-L-leucyl-L-*tert.*-leucine-N-methylamide.

9. A composition comprising the N-formyl-L-leucyl-L-*tert.*-leucine-N-methylamide defined in claim 8 wherein an enantiomeric excess is present of the N-terminal amino acid in the dipeptide of more than 80%.

10. The composition according to claim 9 wherein the enantiomeric excess of the N-terminal amino acid in the dipeptide is more than 98%.

11. The composition according to claim 9 wherein a diastereomeric excess is present of more than 80%.

12. The composition according to claim 11 with a diastereomeric excess of more than 98%.

13. A pharmaceutical composition comprising N-formyl-L-leucyl-L-*tert.*-leucine-N-methylamide according to claim 8 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.